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SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN: CHILD LABOR AND FORCED LABOR UPDATE

REF: STATE 131995

11. (U) Summary: Child labor, primarily children working on their families' farms, remains an issue in Kyrgyzstan. However there is scant evidence that the worst forms of child labor or exploitative child labor is a wide-spread problem. The Kyrgyz Government has a legal framework that prohibits child labor, though enforcement remains weak, and an action program to address child labor. The International Labor Organization has an on-going project to assist the Kyrgyz Government on child labor issues. End summary.

Prevalence Of Child Labor

12. (U) In response to tasking 1/TVPRA (reftel), there were no reports in 2009 that forced labor or the worst forms of child labor were used in the production of goods in Kyrgyzstan. No cases of forced labor in 2009 were reported. The most recent survey of child labor in Kyrgyzstan was published in 2008 and was conducted by the Kyrgyz National Statistics Committee and the International Labor Organization (ILO). According to this study almost all child laborers, 95 percent, worked on family farms and therefore did not meet the definition of the worst forms of child labor or exploitative child labor. The remainder of the children in the study worked in the service sector, e.g., in markets, cafes, etc.

Laws and Regulations

13. (U) There were no new national laws passed in 2009 regarding child labor. According to the ILO National Project Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan, Amina Kurbanova, there were new regulations at the municipal level in the cities of Bishkek and Osh that allow minors who do not have complete identity documents, e.g., birth certificates, etc., easier access to education and health services. This will make it easier for poor children without documents in these cities, who are most likely to be at risk of child labor, to attend school.

14. (U) According to Kurbanova, the national laws on child labor are generally adequate, however there still remain a few gaps. She noted that the law should provide a more complete list of hazardous work that is unsuitable for minors. Kurbanova also said that the law does not include an adequate response to parents who exploit their children on family farms or businesses.

15. (U) The institutions and mechanisms for enforcement of hazardous and forced child labor and the use of children in illicit activities remain the same as in previous years. The State Labor Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labor enforces child labor laws, while the Ministry of Interior enforces laws against the use of minors in illicit activity, such as prostitution. According to Kurbanova, the funding for

enforcement of child labor issues is inadequate at both institutions and ILO has provided them with training and technical expertise. The State Labor Inspectorate has approximately 60 inspectors for all labor issues, including child labor. Post has no statistics on specific cases for 2009.

Programs to Eliminate Child Labor

16. (U) The Kyrgyz Government continued to implement the State Program of Action of Social Partners for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Kyrgyz Republic (2008-2011). According to Kurbanova, as a result of this program there has been increased awareness of the issue by Government bodies that had not previously been involved in child labor issues, such as the Ministry of Education. However, the turnover of top Government official in 2009 slowed the work of this program.

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